



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 7, 1998

Washington, D.C. -- Through the Small Business Administration, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has awarded a \$4.4 million contract to RTK Contractors, Inc./Oneida of Titusville, Florida, to expand the Florida National Cemetery near Bushnell.

Alma B. Moore, Acting Director of VA's National Cemetery System said, "The expansion means that we can continue to serve veterans and their families with the burial benefits they have earned by virtue of their service to the Nation. The expansion also will improve our ability to maintain this facility as a national shrine befitting the sacrifice and dedication of our veterans."

Moore said the expansion will provide burial space for veterans and their eligible family members well into the next century.

More than 31,000 veterans and dependents are buried at the cemetery. The new project will add approximately 45,000 burial sites for casketed burials, consisting of casketed sites and in-ground cremation sites. The contractor also will expand and renovate the existing maintenance facility and administration building, construct an administrative annex and roadways.

Florida National Cemetery, located in Sumter County about 55 miles north of Tampa, was dedicated on May 29, 1988, and is part of the Withlacoochee State Forest. The site is rich in Native American lore, since the Seminole Tribe once occupied this territory. The second Seminole War started near the site in December 1835.

Nationwide, VA operates 115 national cemeteries, half of which can provide full service. Most can accept cremated remains, and all are able to inter the spouse or eligible children of a family member already buried. More than 73,000 veterans and eligible family members were buried in VA national cemeteries in the last fiscal year.

Veterans with discharges other than dishonorable, their spouses and dependent children are eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery. VA also provides grave markers or headstones for the unmarked graves of eligible veterans even if they are not buried in a national cemetery. VA does not reserve space in national cemeteries prior to the time of need. Information on VA burial benefits is available from national cemetery offices and VA regional offices.

For more information, call 1-800-827-1000, or visit the VA Homepage on the World Wide Web at <http://www.va.gov> or the National Cemetery System Homepage at <http://www.cem.va.gov>.